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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated in the following listing of all claims:

1. – 13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A networked system comprising:

a sending node;

a plurality of receiving nodes coupled to receive multicast information sent from the sending node during a multicast operation and coupled to provide acknowledgements indicating whether the multicast information was successfully received; and

a switching medium coupled to supply the multicast information to the respective receiving nodes and to receive and combine the respective acknowledgements into a combined acknowledgement that indicates which of the plurality of receiving nodes acknowledged receipt of the multicast information, wherein the merged acknowledgement is supplied to the sending node.

~~The networked system as recited in claim 12~~ wherein each acknowledgement comprises a plurality of bits, each bit corresponding to a different node, one bit being set to indicate that a node corresponding to the one bit successfully received the multicast information.

15. (Original) The networked system as recited in claim 14 wherein the combined acknowledgement includes a plurality of bits corresponding to multicast targets, each bit of the combined acknowledgement that is set corresponding to a node that successfully received the multicast information.

16. (Currently Amended) A networked system comprising:

a sending node;

a plurality of receiving nodes coupled to receive multicast information sent from the sending node during a multicast operation and coupled to provide acknowledgements indicating whether the multicast information was successfully received; and

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a switching medium coupled to supply the multicast information to the respective receiving nodes and to receive and combine the respective acknowledgements into a combined acknowledgement that indicates which of the plurality of receiving nodes acknowledged receipt of the multicast information, wherein the merged acknowledgement is supplied to the sending node,

~~The networked system as recited in claim 12~~ wherein each acknowledgement comprises a plurality of bits, each bit corresponding to one of a plurality of types of errors.

17. (Original) The networked system as recited in claim 16 wherein corresponding bits from respective ones of the acknowledgements are combined in the combined acknowledgement, a bit being set to a first predetermined value in the combined acknowledgement to indicate that one or more of the targets had a particular one of the errors and the bit being set to a second value to indicate that none of the receiving nodes had the particular one of the errors.

18. – 23. (Cancelled)

24. (Original) A networked system comprising:

a sending node;

a plurality of receiving nodes coupled to receive multicast information sent from the sending node during a multicast operation and coupled to provide acknowledgements indicating whether the multicast information was successfully received; and

a switching medium coupled to supply the multicast information to the respective receiving nodes and to receive and combine the respective acknowledgements into a combined acknowledgement that indicates which of the plurality of receiving nodes acknowledged receipt of the multicast information, wherein the merged acknowledgement is supplied to the sending node,

~~The networked system as recited in claim 12~~ wherein the networked system is operable to reserve switch paths for forwarding the acknowledgements based on switch settings used for forwarding the multicast information.

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25. – 31. (Cancelled)

32. (Currently Amended) A network node comprising:  
a plurality of ports to receive and to transmit multicast information;  
multicast acknowledgement merging logic coupled with the plurality of ports, the logic to  
generate a merged multicast acknowledgement that indicates acknowledging  
target nodes of a multicast, the multicast acknowledgement merging logic to  
merge multicast acknowledgements to indicate whether a multicast was  
successful, and~~The network node of claim 31, further comprising~~ the multicast  
acknowledgement merging logic to set a forwarding mask that indicates those of  
the plurality of ports that correspond to multicast target nodes.

33. (Previously Presented) The network node of claim 32, wherein the multicast acknowledgement merging logic includes inverters to invert indications of acknowledging multicast target nodes, AND gates to logically AND the inverted indications with the forwarding mask, and a NOR gate to logically combine output of the AND gates.